

“Talk Moves”

Classroom Discussions: Using Math Talk to Help Students Learn

by Suzanne Chapin, Catherine O’Connor, Nancy Anderson

1) Revoicing

“So you’re saying that ...”

This move not only gives the teacher time to clarify what the student is saying, it also provides opportunity for fellow students to have another opportunity to clarify and make sense out of what a student is saying.

2) Asking students to restate someone else’s reasoning

“Can you repeat what (another person) just said in your own words?”

This move is useful instead of the teacher revoicing. Ask one student to repeat or rephrase what another student has said, and then immediately follow up with the first student. *“Is what so-and-so said what you meant?”*

3) Asking students to apply their own reasoning to someone else’s reasoning

“Do you agree or disagree and why?”

After a student has made a claim, and the teacher has made sure that everyone else has heard it and has had time to process it, he/she can move on to elicit learners’ reasoning about the claim.

4) Prompting students for further participation

“Would someone like to add on?”

“Who thinks they can explain why this is a good move?”

This move can be used after the teacher has revoiced what a student has said. This prompting for more input on previous statements will, over time, result in learners showing more willingness to weigh in on what the group is considering.

5) Using wait time

“Take your time ... we’ll wait ...”

Many teachers are familiar with the important finding that after having asked a question, a teacher should wait at least ten seconds for students to think before calling on someone for an answer. Wait time also comes into play after a student has been called on. After a teacher has called on a particular student, that student should be given at least the same amount of time to organize his or her thoughts.